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Maryland -

Society of the Sons of the Revolution



SOCIETY OF SONS OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

At a Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Society of Sons of the Revolution, in the State of Maryland, held in Baltimore City, on Thursday, the thirtieth of March, 1893, it was Ordered that the following Extract from the Record of the Proceedings of the said Society at its Annual Meeting, held in said City on Wednesday, the fifteenth of March, 1893, be printed.

Extract from Minutes of Annual Meeting of Society of Sons of the Revolution in the State of Maryland, held March 15th, 1893.

"The President requested Mr. Harris to make some report of the action taken by the Delegates of this Society to the Special Meeting of the General Society of Sons of the Revolution held February 16th, 1893, in New York City, for the purpose of receiving, considering and acting upon a Report from the Joint Committee of Conference theretofore appointed by the General Societies of Sons of the Revolution and of the Sons of the American Revolution, to consider the question of a union of said Societies.

"The Delegation reported that the meeting of the General Society had been largely attended, embracing representatives from nearly all the State Societies, had remained in session for some eight hours, had been most earnest and conscientious in its efforts to effectuate the recommendations of the Joint Committee of Conference, but had, throughout its deliberations, been actuated by a marked and unwavering determination that by no circumstance should the qualifications of eligibility for membership be degraded from the high standard indicated by the form of Constitution proposed by said Conference Committee.

"It then reviewed the proceedings of the meeting of the General Society in detail, showing with particularity the whole course of the debate and stating that the Report of the Conference Committee had been received by it, not 'accepted,' as had been erroneously stated, and that the following resolution had been adopted.

"*Resolved*; That this body recommend the union of the Sons of the Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution, and the adoption of the Constitution contained in said Report' (*i. e.* the Report of the Joint Committee of Conference.)

"This Resolution was transmitted to the General Society of the Sons of the American Revolution then in session in the same building and was shortly returned with the statement that it had, by that body, been adopted precisely as received.

"Upon the receipt of this communication, the General Society proceeded to formulate,—what it naturally understood to be an essential prerequisite to any definite action on the part of the united Societies,—a plan by which a Committee on Credentials should be constituted to scrutinize the Application and Credentials of each member of every Society of the two organizations, in order that upon the formation of the proposed amalgamated Society it should be known to all that it was composed of men whose eligibility measured up to the standard established, not by either of the previously existing Societies, but by that Constitution under which they would then claim to act: Such a plan was suggested by the following Recitals and Resolutions, which after full discussion were adopted and transmitted to the Sister Society:

"Whereas, the Sons of the Revolution in general meeting assembled have unanimously approved of the union of their Society and the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution:

"And Whereas, they do approve the adoption of the Constitution recommended by the Committees of Conference of both Societies, dated December 22d, 1892, and have recommended the same for adoption:

"And Whereas, such Constitution so recommended provides, in Article Third thereof, qualifications for membership therein, therefore be it

"Resolved, that a Committee of Two be appointed by each General Society from among its members, with power to select a fifth member, who shall not belong to either Society, to which Committee shall be submitted a list of the different Societies of Sons of the Revolution and of the Sons of the American Revolution, together with a list of the active members and their residences, in each of said State Societies, and also the *credentials and applications* upon which each of said members was so admitted; and be it further

"Resolved, That said Committee shall examine said credentials and applications, and shall erase from the list of membership in each of said Societies the name of any member, by whose credentials and application it would appear that he was not entitled to membership under the requirements of Article Third of said Constitution; and be it further

"Resolved, That a list of members so revised by such Committee shall be certified to the General Presidents of the Society of Sons of the Revolution and of the Sons of the American Revolution, and that upon the receipt thereof, such General Presidents shall call a Joint Meeting of both General Societies for the adoption of said Constitution and the election of Officers thereunder; at which meeting each State Society shall be entitled to representation according to the provisions of Article Seven of said Constitution, but upon the actual basis of membership so certified by said Committee to said General Presidents; and be it further

"Resolved, That said Constitution, if approved at such meeting, together with the proceedings of this Conference or meeting, shall be submitted for final ratification to the various State Societies; and be it further

"Resolved, That this meeting do now adjourn to meet upon the call of the General Presidents, as herein provided."

"In a short time a Committee of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, headed by General Horace Porter, the President of that association, appeared before the meeting and stated that the action of the Society of Sons of the Revolution, set out in the Recitals and Resolutions just quoted, was 'disapproved' by the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, and further intimated that such action was not in strict accord with the Resolutions adopted at an earlier hour, inasmuch as having by such earlier Resolutions, 'adopted the Report of the Conference Committee,' one of the recommendations of which provided for an immediate joint meeting of the two Societies, the adoption of the new Constitution and election of Officers, it was now incompetent for the Society of Sons of the Revolution to depart in any particular from the programme thus prescribed.

"In reply to this statement a Member called the attention of the Committee to the fact that the Resolution referred to did not, in terms or by implication adopt the said Report or commit the Society of Sons of the Revolution to any such further proceedings as was claimed.

"General Porter accepted the issue thus presented, but upon reading the original of said Resolutions, then in his own possession, was constrained to admit that the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution 'had construed them to have a broader meaning than upon careful reading they seemed to justify.'

"The Society of Sons of the Revolution appointed, on the spot, a Special Committee to confer further with that headed by General Porter, in the effort to reach an agreement under which *some form* of a Committee on Credentials might be appointed, but it was found impossible to obtain the assent of the Sister Society to any form of such Committee or to any plan by which the matter of eligibility of members could in any manner be enquired into or certified; indeed that Society adjourned *sine die* before its Committee finally waited upon our Society and communicated its refusal to entertain any proposition looking to such enquiry and certification.

"Just here is now the issue between the two Societies: Certain Members of that of the Sons of the American Revolution contend, in the public press and elsewhere, that the failure of the proposed union is chargeable to several causes, each one of which however they claim to constitute fault on the part of the Society of Sons of the Revolution; for instance they allege,

(1) "That such failure was due to the 'bad faith' of the Society of Sons of the Revolution, in that having adopted the Report of the Conference Committee and the proposed Constitution, they then sought to evade the consequences of such action by the interposition of a new and 'insulting' prerequisite: It is apparent that this position is untenable, since it plainly appears from the Resolutions adopted *unchanged* by both Societies, that neither said Report nor Constitution were ever adopted by either Society, as was admitted by General Porter and his Committee, and as, in the case of the proposed Constitution, was manifestly impossible, for the reason that its adoption could be had, not by either Society alone, but only by the two when they should have united in joint session, and this is in fact the precise mode prescribed for such adoption by the second paragraph of the fourth recommendation of the Committee of Conference.

"That a proposition to submit the credentials of each member of every Society to the examination of a Committee constituted by the Societies themselves, should be characterized as 'insulting' is explicable upon no theory other than that of apprehension of the results of such scrutiny and if so founded does grave injustice to some, if not to many, of the State Societies of the Sons of the American Revolution, to which, as we believe to be the case in our own State, such examination would be as welcome as to our own.

(2) "Again it is said the Society of Sons of the Revolution 'prevented the union' by failing to hold firmly the requirements of lineal descent and by inserting in the proposed Constitution a provision in favor of collaterals, in certain instances:

"To this proposition it seems unnecessary to make further reply than merely to note that the proposed Constitution was prepared by a Joint Committee of both Societies and that, although not adopted by either of the General Societies, it was recommended by both in identically the same language, but it is submitted that the provision in the proposed Constitution relating to the admission of Collaterals is so carefully circumscribed as to present small danger of abuse and to render it objectionable in but moderate degree.

(3) "Another charge and one upon which much argument is expended, is to the effect that the proposition for a Committee on Credentials was fatal to union since it sought to deprive the State Societies of the exclusive right to judge of the qualifications of members and vested that authority in a central body.

"Whatever force might have attached to this objection had the State Societies been deprived of their individual rights after the adoption of a new Constitution, it scarcely applied to the then existing circumstances: The question was not how shall persons be admitted to membership under the new Constitution but how shall such new Constitution come into effectual existence? Certainly it could be created only by the act of persons who were qualified to form the new Association under the requirements prescribed by it. Unquestionably, no State Society had ever measured its members by this standard, and it is equally indisputable that under the Constitutions of the existing Societies there was no tribunal competent to ascertain, not whether individuals were qualified to retain the membership they already held, but whether they were also possessed of those qualifications which were by the proposed Constitution made essential to the formation of a new Society under its provisions. And it is to be noted that the proposed Constitution, recommended by both Societies, while it provided in its Third and Fifth Articles for the original jurisdiction of the State Societies, had also reserved to the General Society a power to entertain and determine all questions affecting the qualification for membership in any State Society, upon their proper presentation. (Article 8.)

"The position of the Sons of the Revolution, on the other hand, is simply this:—When assembled in session of their General Society on February 16th, 1893, they received the Report of the Joint Committee

of Conference ; adopted a Resolution to the effect that they were in favor of a union of the two Societies ; and another recommendation that the proposed form of Constitution be adopted.

" Ascertaining that this action had met the approval of their Sister Society, by the adoption by it of said Resolution *totidem verbis*, they proceeded to provide for the formation of a Committee on Credentials to which should be submitted the qualifications, under such proposed Constitution, of all who should claim a voice in its adoption and effectuation.

" The necessity and propriety of such safeguard are equally apparent and no better guarantee of absolute good faith could have been devised than the provision that their own membership, as well as that of the Sister Society, should be submitted to a Committee created by both, upon which each should have equal representation, and by the certification of which all should alike stand or fall.

In conclusion, the Delegation reported that throughout all the debates of this most important meeting of the General Society, the Delegates from the Society of Sons of the Revolution in the State of Maryland had with unswerving fidelity adhered to the proposition that while clothed with authority to surrender the Charter of the Association which they represented, to a Society to be formed of "*Sons of the Revolution*," according to the standard prescribed by the proposed Constitution, they had yet deemed themselves bound in honor to report to this Society that they had so surrendered it to a new Society composed of persons demonstrated to be so qualified to bear that title, or to return that Charter to those who had entrusted its care to them, *for the want of such demonstration of qualification.*

" And the Delegates asked that, having fully reported their action in the premises, their discharge of the trust confided to them receive the approval or the condemnation of this Society, according to its estimate of the fidelity with which the duties had been performed.

" Dr. William Lee stated that he deemed it most fitting that, as a Member of the Maryland Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, as well as of this Society, he should move, as he did with great pleasure, that the thanks of this Society be extended to the Delegates who had just reported, for the wholly satisfactory manner in which they had discharged the duties of the office with which they had been clothed ;

" And further, that this Society does now formally approve and endorse the action of its Delegates at the meeting of the General Society of Sons of the Revolution, held in New York City upon February 16th, 1893, and the action of the said General Society upon said date.

" These Resolutions were greeted with applause and, being put to the vote, were unanimously adopted."

By Order,

ROBT. RIDDELL BROWN,

Secretary.

BALTIMORE, April 5th, 1893.

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